

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Block Island School

October 20, 2014

7:00 p.m.

The New Shoreham School Committee met in open session on Monday, October 20, 2014, in the media center of the Block Island School. Chair William Padien called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The following members were present: Elizabeth Connor, Ann Hall, William Padien, and Christopher Willi. Patricia Doyle was not in attendance. Robert Hicks was also present.

Approval of Minutes

A motion (Hall, Padien) to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 15, 2014, as presented carried with a vote of 4-0.

A motion (Padien, Hall) to approve the minutes of the executive session meeting held on September 15, 2014, as written carried with a vote of 4-0.

Visitors

Mr. Hicks presented Nathaniel Shaw to the School Committee as the students' choice as teacher of the year. In their recognition of Mr. Shaw, our secondary mathematics teacher, the students wrote the following in the yearbook: "In the past two years Mr. Shaw has shown dedication to his students and their well-being. During these years he has taught math classes ranging from Algebra to Calculus. Mr. Shaw's teaching style utilizes technology to reinforce, and make interesting, math concepts we learn in class. One quality of Mr. Shaw that we really appreciate is how he never fails to put himself in his students' shoes. He knows how hard high school can be at times and is patient in assisting kids through it. He dedicates his time after school to coaching JV softball, JV girls' basketball, and actively participates in school spirit! He always encourages kids to do their best..." School Committee members thanked Mr. Shaw for everything he has done since he started here.

Members of the Large Capital Asset Strategy Committee attended this evening's meeting as part of its community outreach to gather information prior to developing a holistic, long-term strategy for the Town's assets. The LCAS Committee is tasked with identifying and prioritizing the community needs and then recommending those needs to the Town Council. Sven Risom, chair of the LCAS Committee, stated that they were there to gain input, there are no bad ideas, and there would be no discussion on how we could afford all of the items. Most people talked about a community center and what that would include (gym, exercise room, yoga studio, pool, bowling alley, racquet ball court, lounge for teens that would allow them to shoot pool, watch movies, etc.). Others spoke of the need for an auditorium at the school, affordable rental housing for year-round and seasonal workers, bathrooms and a shower facility at Ball-O'Brien Park, an art center separate from a community center, a useable boat ramp, and good expertise in place to oversee and keep our buildings in good shape.

Members of the Class of 2015 were in attendance to appeal to the School Committee to overturn Mr. Hicks' denial of their request to move graduation off-campus. Thea Monje, spokesperson

for the senior class, stated that they have been talking about an off campus graduation for several years. The students (seniors and underclassmen) and most of their parents are willing to put in the time and work needed for an off campus venue. If the students move quickly enough the Spring House may be available. School Committee members emphasized that all school activities, including graduation, are to be alcohol free and the venue must be made aware of this. If the venue does not agree to the no alcohol requirement, graduation can not be held there. Elizabeth Connor questioned whether moving the location would mean giving up the planning. Mr. Hicks stated that graduation is run primarily by the principal and can not be delegated. The students should be reporting to the administration, not the School Committee. If it is decided that off campus graduations are allowed he will work on a policy or procedure on how this would be handled. A motion (Connor, Willi) to give tacit approval for the Class of 2015 to move forward with plans to have graduation off campus and to authorize the superintendent to create a policy or procedure governing off campus graduations carried with a vote of 3-0, with Ann Hall having recused herself.

Reports

William Padien reported that he attended the meeting with the state representatives a couple of weeks ago. Topics discussed included energy, lighting, solar, facilities, and grant possibilities.

Ann Hall reported that she attended the Special Education Advisory Committee meeting where they discussed having some form/letter developed so that all teachers are aware of students in their classes with IEPs.

Through collaboration with Washington County Coalition for Children, we have been awarded a grant to support implementation of Youth Mental Health First Aid, which is designed to teach adults who regularly interact with young people age 12-18 who are experiencing mental health issues, addictions, or are in crisis. Block Island's library, recreation department, and police department endorsed the grant and expressed a desire to participate. This program is open to any community member interested in participating.

Mr. Hicks submitted a list of capital projects he intends to forward to the town. The projects include drainage around the playground, replacing the black membrane roof, the water system booster upgrade, the façade restoration, and increasing the photovoltaic system. School Committee members suggested adding replacement locks for the classroom doors. Once the audit has been completed we will see which projects can be funded from the reserve.

Old Business

A copy of the proposed 2015-2016 school calendar was submitted for School Committee review. Mr. Hicks wanted everyone to be aware that seniors would have only two days for final exams with graduation on June 11 because exams cannot begin until after the 171st day of school. Matthew Moran, on behalf of the Teachers' Association, requested several changes, including having the students start the Wednesday after Labor Day with the teachers' professional development days on the Tuesday after Labor Day, Veterans Day, and Presidents Day. A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve the 2014-2015 school calendar as amended this evening (remove the teacher work day on September 3 and reschedule it to February 15) carried with a vote of 4-0.

New Business

A motion (Hall, Padien) to accept the resignation of Amy Dugan as a teacher assistant with regret carried with a vote of 4-0.

A motion (Hall, Padien) to accept the resignation of Jill Seppa as a Cultural Activities Coordinator with regret carried with a vote of 4-0.

A motion (Hall, Padien) to consent to the appointment of Mary Lemle as a teacher assistant and as the advisor for both the yearbook and National Honor Society carried with a vote of 4-0.

Mr. Hicks reported that while our Maintenance Director/Custodian has been on medical leave Lynn Fletcher has organized the cleaning of the school, far and above expectations and her job requirements. This has been essential as our substitute coverage has been inconsistent. Mr. Hicks recommended an increase of \$0.25 per hour in Ms Fletcher's wages as a small recognition. A motion (Padien, Connor) to approve a wage increase of \$0.25 per hour for Lynn Fletcher carried with a vote of 4-0.

Mr. Hicks reported that one of our water pumps has failed and another is leaking badly. He explained that we could repair the current system (\$6,000 to \$10,000) and hold off on an upgrade or upgrade now (\$25,000 to \$30,000). The upgrade would pay for itself in approximately five years through energy savings. Both options require putting the project out to bid. A motion (Padien, Connor) to authorize the superintendent to go out to bid to upgrade the school's water pump system carried with a vote of 4-0.

Mr. Hicks stated that Washington Trust has offered a fee discount if we consolidate our accounts there. The savings will accrue to the Town. A motion (Connor, Hall) to approve switching the school's general account to Washington Trust carried with a vote of 4-0.

Calendar of Events

The next regular meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Monday, November 17.

Correspondence

A copy of the letter sent to the Town Council from Recreation Director Rob Closter commending Kirk Littlefield for the work he has done at Heinz Field over the past three years was submitted for School Committee information.

Adjournment

A motion (Padien, Connor) at 9:05 p.m. to adjourn carried with a vote of 4-0.

Marsha L. Gutierrez, Clerk

Date approved: November 17, 2014